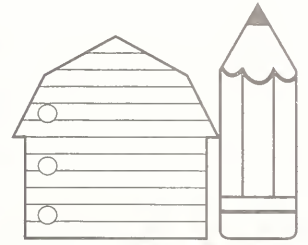


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Ag in the Classroom

United States
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Notes

A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 317-A, Administration Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200. 202/720-5727

New Curriculum Package Examines Lines On The Land

What are all those lines and patterns on the landscape? The story of how and why those lines were made — and what they mean to each of us — is the subject of a new teaching package called "Lines on the Land."

Developed by the Iowa Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners; the USDA Soil Conservation Service; and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, the materials are designed for students in sixth through eighth grade. They can be integrated into science, math, or social studies classes. The teaching package also includes some activities that help teach landscape arts.

"'Lines on the Land' gives students and parents the chance to learn about what they see when they're driving down the road or flying in a plane. It gives them a greater appreciation of what's around them," says Ruth Chenhall, education and information specialist for the National Association of Conservation Districts.

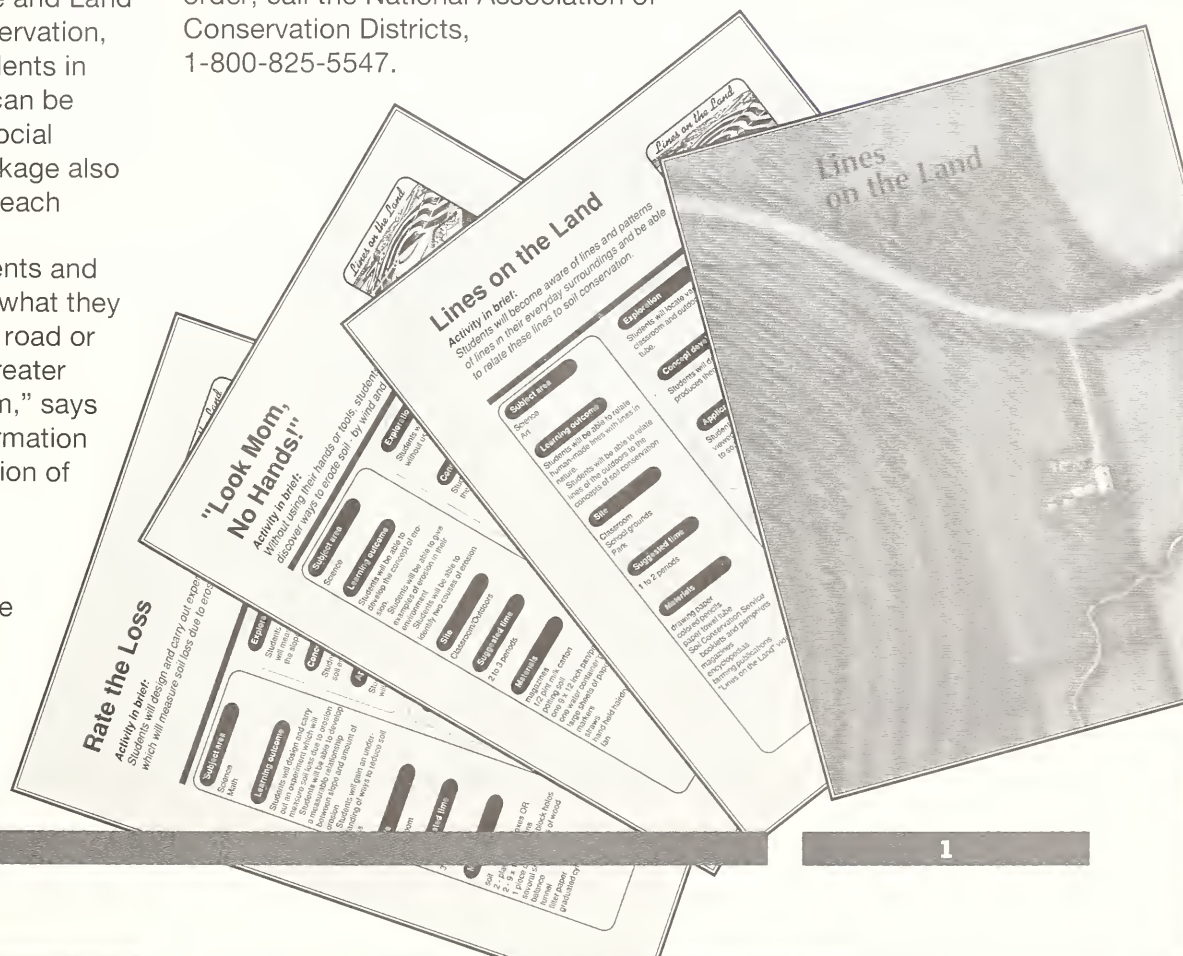
"Lines on the Land" includes a videotape, 16 lesson plans, and a color brochure. "Because there are so many activities," says Roger Beane, a teacher who helped develop the curriculum package, "it's easy for teachers to choose the activities that fit their

curriculum, their teaching style, and their students. It's almost like a recipe book."

The activities are hands-on, and require students to use critical thinking skills to solve problems. For example, in an activity called "Splish-Splash," students discover the destructive force of rain on soil and how to prevent it. Then they research soil conservation techniques that minimize the force of water on the soil ... and try out the methods for themselves to see whether or not their ideas were correct.

Cost of the teaching package is \$26, plus shipping and handling costs, postpaid. To order, call the National Association of Conservation Districts, 1-800-825-5547.

In "Lines on the Land," students learn more about how farmers protect the land by their conservation practices.



Editors's Note

Recently, a representative from a major textbook publishing company asked me what I would like to have teachers know about Ag in the Classroom. I told her that one of the most important aspects of Ag in the Classroom is that teachers are enthusiastic about it. Once they have a chance to learn about the program and get involved, they are among its most vigorous supporters. Teachers like Ag in the Classroom. We would get nowhere, no matter how noble our cause, if teachers did not find that employing Ag in the Classroom contributed to a positive educational experience that achieved the desired student learner outcomes.

Library Helps Preserve Eastern Europe's Ag Heritage

The thawing of relations between Eastern Europe and the United States has brought a flood of visitors to the nation's capital. "They're not tourists," says Joe Howard, director of the National Agricultural Library (NAL). "They're agricultural librarians looking for advice in protecting their agricultural information. And they want to return the favor by sharing their information with the United States."

Typical of the visitors was Helena Slezakova, a librarian at the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information for Agriculture in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Slezakova came to NAL because her country's agricultural knowledge is in danger of being lost.

"We, too, have a very precious collection of old agricultural publications," Slezakova said, "but unfortunately we don't have the facilities to maintain them the way you do." In many Eastern European countries, air pollution has proved to be especially damaging to old publications.

Czechoslovakia is not the only country concerned about preserving its agricultural

heritage. "It is a worldwide problem," Howard said. "Even here at

NAL we are quite concerned with staying ahead of the dramatic deterioration of

the nation's collection of agricultural information."

Slezakova spent two weeks at NAL learning how the library develops and applies new information management technology to meet the problem. From compact disks to preparing abstracts for AGRICOLA, NAL's bibliographic database, her visit gave her many new ideas to take home with her. In particular, she is interested in ISIS, NAL's computer



automated catalog, which allows NAL patrons to find the information they need in minutes.

"I would like to be more acquainted with the ISIS system because we are now preparing the automation of our library's catalogs. ISIS looks like an excellent system for that purpose," she said.

To help in building stronger ties between the world's agricultural libraries, NAL sponsored a conference with eastern European agricultural librarians in Beltsville, MD, early this winter. Representatives from six Eastern European countries attended, and participants vowed to continue international cooperation in preserving and exchanging agricultural knowledge. Within the past year, NAL has also hosted librarians from a number of other countries.

CORRECTION

The December/January issue of Ag Notes featured an article on a teaching kit that shows students "All About Apples." Since the article was published, many teachers have contacted the New York and New England Apple Institute for a copy of the teaching kit.

Unfortunately, the price quoted in the article did not include \$2.50 for postage and envelope. The correct price for the kits should be \$9.50 for one to five copies, with cost reductions for larger orders. Contact the New York & New England Apple Institute, PO Box 768, Westfield, MA 01086.

Spotlight

Iowa Teacher Preserves the Prairie

In teaching science, there's no substitute for first-hand observation. And because of his belief in letting students see things for themselves, Roger Beane has created natural habitats that provide living laboratories for his students.

Beane teaches life science to seventh graders at Oelwein Junior High in Oelwein, Iowa. Much of the course focuses on conservation and the importance of protecting our natural resources.

He has integrated agriculture into his science lessons since he began teaching. But even in the heart of the corn belt, few students have a direct understanding of agriculture, Beane has found. "Surprisingly, out of a class of 25 students, I may have at the most five whose livelihood depends directly on the farm. Fewer and fewer kids have any direct experience with agriculture," he observes.

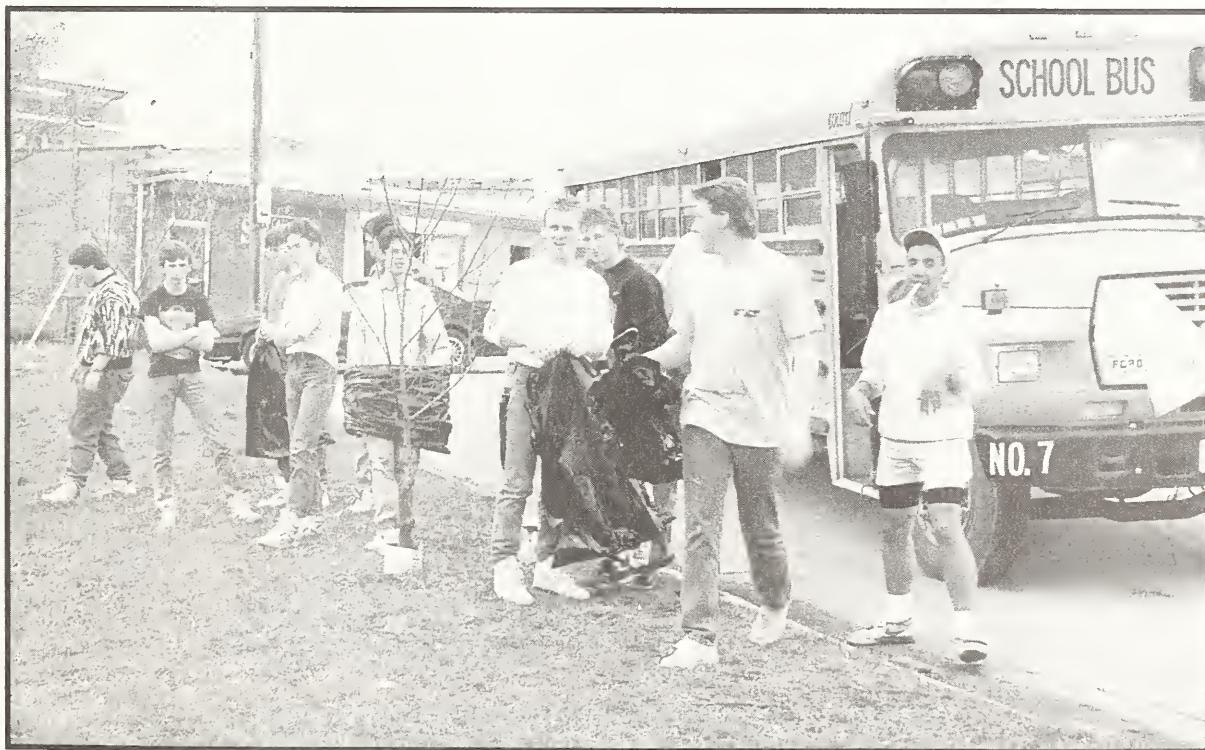
Still, agriculture is Iowa's number one industry. To bring home its importance, Beane asks students to imagine what would happen to their parents' job if the soil disap-

peared one day. "At first, some students think that because their parents work for a gas station or in a clothing store, they wouldn't be affected. But as they recognize that the fiber to create the clothing comes from the soil, they quickly see how important this natural resource is for everyone in the state."

On land near the school, Beane and other teachers have developed a wildlife area that now houses a nature trail. Originally planted with trees and shrubs provided by the county conservation service, the area now serves as a refuge for a variety of birds and animals. "When our students learn about the environment, they can make their own observations," he says.

Recently, Beane has begun creating a second natural area, this time a prairie, next to the school. Students have worked to germinate traditional prairie grasses and flowers. "We're preserving a part of Iowa's history for our students," he says.

Beane was one of the teachers who helped develop "Lines on the Land." He now uses some of the activities in his own classroom.



Roger Beane's students are creating a prairie outside the school.

Beagle Brigade's Furry Founding Father Retires

Jackpot, the beagle that established the USDA detector dog program in the northeastern United States, recently was honored at New York City Animal Medical Center's Heart of Gold Awards ceremony — just before his retirement from active service.

In 1983, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service rescued Jackpot from a South Carolina dog pound. After training, Jackpot went to work in a pilot project to sniff out illegal foodstuffs brought into the country.

In 1986, the pilot effort was expanded into a permanent program under a new name — "Agriculture's Beagle Brigade." Dogs in the "Beagle Brigade" are trained to sniff out prohibited agricultural items illegally brought into this country by international travelers.

Shortly after receiving the award, Jackpot retired. At a December 10, 1991, retirement ceremony, Jackpot was presented with a letter and a certificate signed by the APHIS Administrator recognizing his many years of successful service.

Like many retirees, Jackpot is now living the good life on a three-acre estate in the Maryland countryside. But his successors in the Beagle Brigade continue to protect the U.S. food supply by preventing animal and plant pests and diseases not found in the U.S. from infecting our nation's food supply.



Canadian Conference Links Educators, Industry

Alberta's Ag in the Classroom program will host a conference with the intriguing title, "Don't Shoot The Teacher." Emphasizing the importance of developing relationships between agriculture and the schools, the conference will be at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton, Alberta, October 24 - 27, 1992.

"All too often," says Betty Gabert, coordinator of the Ag in the Classroom Program in Alberta, "we see a split between rural and urban communities. How often have we heard people in agriculture say, 'These city people just don't understand'?"

Because teachers are the critical link in helping tomorrow's consumers understand agriculture, "the agriculture industry should reach out to teachers in the AITC program," Gabert believes. As North America becomes even more urbanized (today, 80 percent of the school children in

Alberta come from urban areas), teachers will play an even more important role.

The conference features activities for both teachers and the agriculture industry. For teachers, the conference will include information on how to integrate agriculture into the social studies, science, and language arts curricula. It will also suggest a number of models for identifying and handling sensitive environmental issues.

For representatives of the agricultural industry, the conference offers an opportunity to learn more directly about what teachers are looking for when they choose curricular materials to use in their classroom. And for everyone, the conference will provide an opportunity to share ideas and ask questions.

Those who attended last year's U.S. AITC conference will automatically receive registration materials. For more information, or to register, contact Betty Gabert, Ag in the Classroom Program, Alberta Agriculture - Education Branch, 2nd Floor, 7000 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, or call 403-427-2403.

EPCOT Internships Available for Ag Students

Agriculture students, like well-known athletes, can now say, "I'm going to Disney World." Specifically, they may be going to EPCOT Center as part of an Agricultural Student Intern program.

The Land, a pavilion in Future World at EPCOT Center, gives a close-up view of agriculture. Guests travel through a series of greenhouses in which many of the world's most important agricultural crops, concepts, and technologies are showcased.

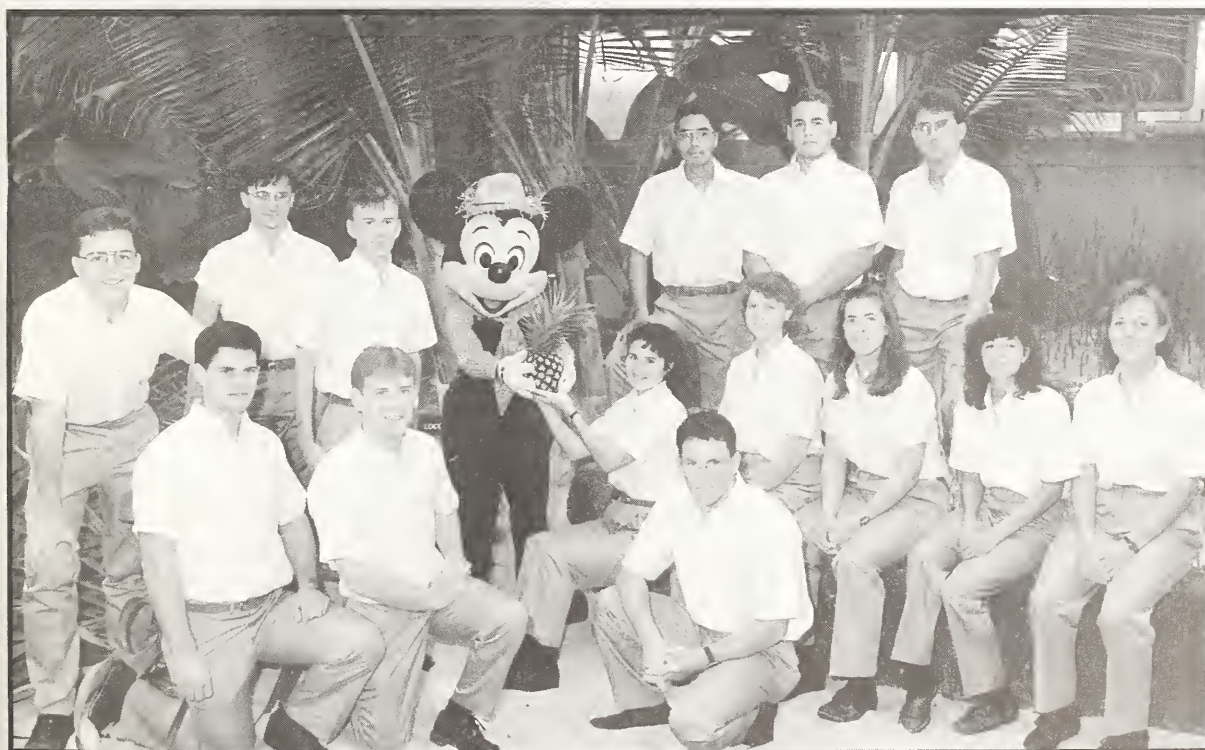
Scientists with advanced degrees in agricultural engineering, agronomy, aquaculture, chemistry, entomology, horticulture,

plant biotechnology, plant nutrition, and plant pathology ... as well as additional professional agricultural staff ... support programs including integrated pest management, greenhouse environment management, and fish culture.

The Land Agricultural Internship Program offers select students an opportunity to work in this unique and dynamic agricultural show. The students' primary work is to grow the more than thirty crops in the show. Typically, their work includes planting, pruning and harvesting fruits and vegetables in tropical, desert, and greenhouse settings. They spend six hours a week conducting walking tours. They also participate in discussion classes on technology applications at The Land and take field trips to see Florida agriculture.

The Land Agricultural Internship Program gives students a chance to learn more about career opportunities in agricultural sciences today. "It's exciting to see how much the interns learn during their experience," says Peter Cook, Communications Coordinator for the Science and Technology Group at EPCOT Center.

The internships, which last six months, provide a salary and a travel allowance. For more information on the internships, contact Peter Cook, P.O. Box 10,000, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830.



New Smithsonian Posters Offer Food For Thought

Five hundred years ago, Columbus sailed west from Spain in search of the "gold" of the Indies — spices, especially the black peppercorns of the Spice Islands that were so highly valued in Europe. Instead, he found the culinary gold of the New World — corn, potatoes, tomatoes, chili peppers, chocolate, and many other foods that have transformed the ways people eat all over the world.

To commemorate foods native to North America, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History has developed a series of posters and accompanying activity booklets. "Good as Gold" introduces more

than 80 different foods of American origin that are available in food stores in the United States today. Other posters in the series highlight African-American and Native American foods and medicines.

The booklet that accompanies "Good as Gold" provides basic information on foods native to North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. From the atemoya to yerba mat*, the pamphlet provides brief descriptions of these foods. It also includes suggestions for activities that can help students learn more about the foods and a list of selected references.

The posters are priced at \$6.00 each.

(\$4.00 if ordered in quantities of 50 or more.) For more information, contact the Publications Division, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.

"Good as Gold" is one of four new posters developed by the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History.

GOOD AS GOLD

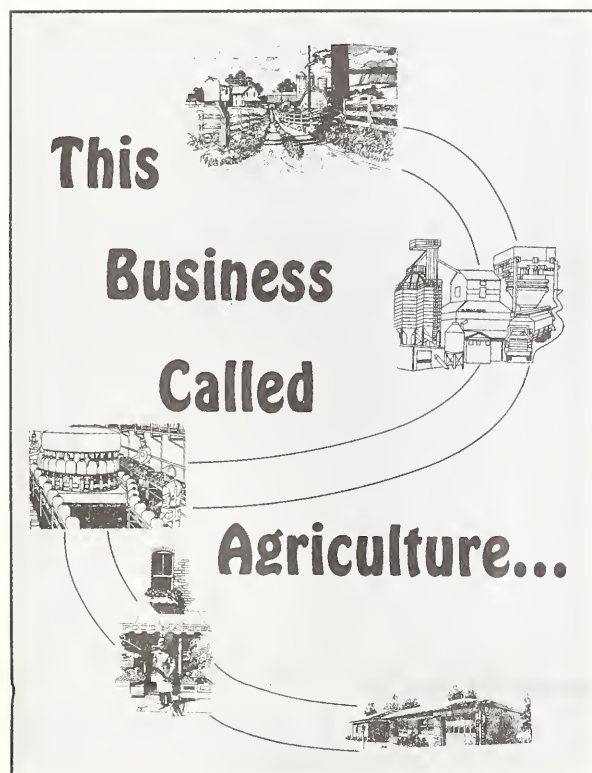


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Coloring Book Introduces Students To The Business Of Agriculture

Most Wisconsin students probably know that their state is a leading dairy producer. But would they suspect that their state also produces 95 percent of the nation's supply of ginseng?

They would if they have read the latest edition of "This Business Called Agriculture." The coloring book, now in its third year, is distributed to all fourth graders by the Wisconsin Agri-Business Foundation. It teaches



about agriculture through math problems, science experiments, social studies lessons, and language arts activities. (Actually, they're called "Activities" in the book.)

A teacher's guide offers suggestions on how to integrate the activities into the classroom. It also includes names and addresses of resource people throughout the state who can assist with field trips, guest speakers, and additional information.

Response to the publication has been excellent, according to Anna Maenner, executive vice president of the foundation. It was rated "excellent" by 74 percent of the teachers who used it in their classroom.

The coloring book is just one of the activities of Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom. A three-credit graduate course will be offered for the second year at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, from June 15th through the 19th.

"The teachers begin by touring a variety of agribusinesses," says Dennis Sabel, state contact. "From a canning company to a trout farm, they see the diversity of agriculture in our state."

It's important for teachers to see the different facilities for themselves. "When people feel confident that they know something about a subject, they're more willing to spend time on it in the classroom," Sabel says. "These tours help our teachers develop a comfort level that will make them want to pass on the information to their students."

After attending the week-long class, teachers go back to their home communities to develop lesson plans. Near the end of the summer, they return to share lesson plans with each other. "Teachers leave the class with a well-rounded set of activities they can use to introduce agriculture to their students," Sabel points out.

Wisconsin 4th graders

learn about "This

Business Called Agriculture."

PHOTO CAPTION:

In an innovative way to spread the word about the importance of agricultural literacy, the Simpson County (MS) Farm Bureau sponsored a float in the Magee Christmas Parade. The float featured students and a teacher sitting at desks and studying their Ag in the Classroom packets.



The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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